AUCHINLECK COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN
2019-2024

COALFIELDS COMMUNITY FUTURES

Foreword

Auchinleck, as a village, has existed for centuries although, the one we know today probably has its roots in the 19th century. Over the years it has grown into a thriving community, that is proud of its heritage and of its people.

Coal mining was a main feature of the village even in those early times. The evidence of just how important it must have been to the economy and to the way of life can be seen in the numerous pit bings and ruins dotted around the area. A glance at a centuries old map shows that the number of coal mines in the parish of Auchinleck, which included the village of Lugar and the small hamlet of Cronberry, was in the teens at one point. All the mines were privately owned, the coal from these was hard won and the dangerous working and harsh living conditions served to cement the men, women and children in the miners' rows into fiercely proud and close knit communities. These smaller communities were the forerunners of the village we now know as Auchinleck.

Coal mining expanded under the private ownership of the William Baird and Dallmellington mining companies who were responsible for the sinking of two new deep pits of Highouse and Barony Collieries. Conditions remained difficult but the nationalisation of the mining industry in 1947 saw a huge improvement of miners' working conditions and wages and a period of relative prosperity saw the village grow to a population of over 5,000.

With expansion of the pits came also the introduction of a large number of supportive industries, that provided much needed employment for men and women outside the pits themselves. Shops selling everything a growing community needed stood alongside Curries lemonade factory and the Co-operative Laundry. Along with plentiful employment came a vibrant and dynamic social infrastructure with the local Community Centre at its heart. Entertainment from the local Operatic Society to international concert parties from Russia and elsewhere as well as youth activities and clubs of all descriptions ensured the villagers were never short of cultural fulfilment. The pinnacle of the 50's and 60's was of course Auchinleck dance which could boast that it attracted all the bands of that era who were worth listening to.

A study of the history of Auchinleck shows that even in the 60's the local Councils were worried about the future of industry in the area. A disaster which killed four men and temporarily closed the Barony pit in 1962. This was a major blow to the community and resulted in frantic efforts by the Miners Unions, local Councillors, MP's and local people to keep the mining industry and the community alive. They all succeeded in forcing the Government and Coal Board to sink a new shaft and re-open the Barony in 1966. Alongside the colliery the Barony Power station was built which was fuelled by the by-products from the pit. Sadly however, there was a slow but steady trickle of decline in the country as a whole and while the community rallied behind the miners, who remained the prime workers in the area, when they felt it necessary to strike for better wages in 1972 and 1974 to save the pits from closure. The latter battle was finally lost and the heart of the community weakened when both local pits, Highhouse and Barony, closed for the final time in 1983 and 1989, respectively.

Currrently the success of Auchinleck Talbot has contributed greatly to giving the residents some hope to cling to and has helped to maintain that pride and community togetherness which has sustained the village through thick and thin for the last hundred years. So has the work of the various voluntary organisations and council services who have contributed to the compilation of this action plan, which we hope will herald a new beginning for the current and future generations of the village and restore the pride and determination that made us unique and revered all over Scotland.

The 60's proved that working together in a common cause does lead to success. We ask that once again the people of Auchinleck work together again and rise to the challenge of regenerating our community.

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Introduction

421 Community Household Surveys were returned representing the views of well over 1000 residents

130 people attended the Community Futures Voting Event.

Coalfields Community Futures
The Coalfields Community Futures Programme is an approach to local community planning and sustainable community development that aims to encourage active citizenship and build local democracy. It enables communities to devise a community action plan which makes a case for the things that the community thinks are important and wishes to make happen.

The process builds on existing processes of community action research to identify local needs and priorities, using residents as co-researchers. We work with local residents and groups to develop a common sense of purpose and assist them to produce a deliverable community action plan.

To support the action planning process the community receive a Participatory Budget Fund which is available to local constituted community or voluntary groups.

This budget enables the community to fund small projects that are identified by the community through the results of the household surveys, stakeholder interviews and the Community Open Event.

Auchinleck Community Action Plan
The plan summarises community views and information about:

- Our community now
- Our shared Vision for Auchinleck
- Priority themes and actions
- Making the links to Community Planning

The Steering Group brought together representatives from:

Auchinleck Community Council
Auchinleck Community Development Initiative
Auchinleck Indoor Bowling Club
Auchinleck Primary School Early Education Centre
Auchinleck Talbot Football Club and local residents

The Steering Group would like to thank everyone who took part in helping Auchinleck plan for a bright future!

Our Community Now

Population
Auchinleck currently has a total population of around 3,750 with 2,747 people living in the most deprived 20% of areas in Scotland. This figure is based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2016.
Economic activity based on the 2011 Census shows that 63.8% of people between 16-74 are economically active which is lower than Scotland as a whole at 69%.
The village has an "ageing population" with younger people moving away to pursue further education or career progression. With an increasing diverse mix of cultures and ethnicity, the population has changed with more new faces in the village.

Housing
Figures from the 2011 Census show us that over 52% of housing is owner occupied and of the rented accommodation 39% is Local Authority housing. A number of social housing properties have been refreshed in terms of refurbishment, roughcasting and cladding which has made a positive impact to the look of the village. There are small numbers of unoccupied houses that may require to be demolished due to vandalism and attracting anti-social behaviour. A number of vacant brownfield sites are now being utilised by private developers providing a range of new build houses with various apartment sizes including tailoring for those with any special needs.

Economy
Historically Auchinleck was served by two major industries, namely Coalmining and Textiles. Since their demise the main employment sectors has been Retail (Tesco, The Co-operative and minor shops along the Main Street), Transport & Trade Repairs (Liddell's Bus Garage and Bridgend) and Manufacturing (Highouse Industrial Estate). Looking forward, the Scottish Government along with the Three Ayrshire Councils are working to develop their Ayrshire Growth Deal, which will promote and stimulate the whole Ayrshire Economy via a multimillion pound public sector cash injection. Auchinleck has an unemployment rate higher than the East Ayrshire average and almost double the Scottish average. Auchinleck should be well placed to receive economic spin offs from Dumfries House Estate and it's regional attraction due to its close proximity to the village.Auchinleck Community Development Initiative operate a social enterprise for the community offering employment opportunities to previously unemployed residents. To date, they have created over 185 jobs for local residents.

Education & Childcare
Auchinleck has two primary schools (Auchinleck Primary School and St Patrick's Primary School) and one secondary school (Auchinleck Academy) with a catchment area of Auchinleck, Drongan, Catrine, Ochiltree, Mauchline, Muirkirk and Sorn. Young people of secondary age can also opt to attend St. Joseph's Academy in Kilmarnock. Auchinleck Primary incorporates an excellent Early Years facility within the site with an adjacent "Outdoor Classroom" facility. Auchinleck Academy is due to close and merge with Cumnock Academy as part of new £70m learning campus development located between Auchinleck and Cumnock.

The new Campus will incorporate:

- Barshare Primary School, Supported Learning and Early Childhood Centre.
- Greenmill Primary School and Early Childhood Centre.
- Hillside ASN School
- Auchinleck Academy
- Cumnock Academy and Supported Learning Centre

Health & Care
There is an aging population and the number of people living with a limiting long term illness in Auchinleck is 27.8% which is considerably higher than Scotland as a whole at 19.6% Source Census 2011 There are two doctors operating in the surgery with good facilities.

Our Community Now

Community Facilities
Auchinleck has a community centre, the Boswell Centre, located within the heart of the village providing a range of rooms and halls available to hire, which are suitable for meetings, presentations, classes and private parties. It offers ample car parking and access to projectors and screens. The Main Hall can accommodate 150 people and is ideal for hosting large-scale events and has a music surround system, projector and a 5m x 4m screen available for use. The Lesser Hall can accommodate 50 people and the fully equipped adjoining kitchen which can also be hired if required.

Auchinleck Library is situated within the centre along with an ICT suite with 12 work units. The village has an outdoor bowling green and an international indoor bowling arena, both producing UK and World Champion bowlers. The Knowe Garden Centre is a two and half acre community garden facility situated directly behind the Boswell Centre with attractions such as a Sensory Garden, Poison Garden and a BBQ social seating area. It also sells plant and flora to the local residents at community prices. The community gardens will be offering horticultural training areas and barbecue areas for community use.

Auchinleck Leisure Centre combines all sports facilities including an indoor pool, indoor playing hall and full sized artificial playing surface. Two full sized grass pitches are located at Merlin Park and are well used by groups & individuals in throughout the village and beyond.

Environment & Open Spaces
Auchinleck is well located for access to green space and woodland. The natural environment has strong links to the rich cultural and industrial heritage that can be found in and around Auchinleck. The local woodland area is great for accessing John Muir Awards. Close by there are very good walks and outdoor activities at Dumfries Estate and Boswell Estate.The Merlin Park is not used to its full potential due to drainage issues. Other assets include the A-Frame bike track and various community seating areas.

Culture & Heritage
Auchinleck as a village has its roots in the 19th century. Coal mining was a main feature of the village even in those early times with numerous pit bings and ruins. The two main pits in the area were Highouse and Barony Collieries. To commerate the mining history a frame from the former Barony Colliery has been restored as a visitor attraction set just outside the village. The site boasts a picnic area with interactive information boards and is known as the Barony A Frame.
The village has hosted famous bands in its time, playing to full crowds, the 'Who' being amongst the most notable. There is also a strong heritage of junior football in Auchinleck Talbot with many trophies being won.

Other heritage sites include Pennylands Camps, Boswell Estate and Dumfries House. The Cumnock History Group is actively recording the history of the area and hosts a comprehensive website.

Roads & Transport
Auchinleck has a Railway Station situated behind the Main Street. This line serves commuters going between Glasgow and Carlisle, although Sunday services can be patchy. The A76 by-pass connects Auchinleck with Cumnock and New Cumnock, with the B road taking you through the heart of the village directly into Cumnock town centre. Buses pass through the village to destinations such as Ayr, Kilmarnock and Glasgow.
Local groups can utilise transport via a community transport initiative, known locally as the "Yellow Busses". This service provides transport and drivers to voluntary sector groups at subsidised rates.

Community Action Plan: Considerations
Stalled spaces, pockets of unkempt waste ground in and around the village which could be put to good use are a key consideration for many. These spaces could provide useful areas for the community such as parking, leisure and growing spaces. Some of these sites are prone to fly tipping and better enforcement needs to be put in place to deal with this issue.

The Main Street has a number of issues for people including the narrow pavements and volume of traffic that makes pedestrian use of the main street an uncomfortable experience. Many of the shops have closed or are closing and the area is looking dilapidated.

Drainage issues have been highlighted especially at Merlin Park with it being unusable much of the time.

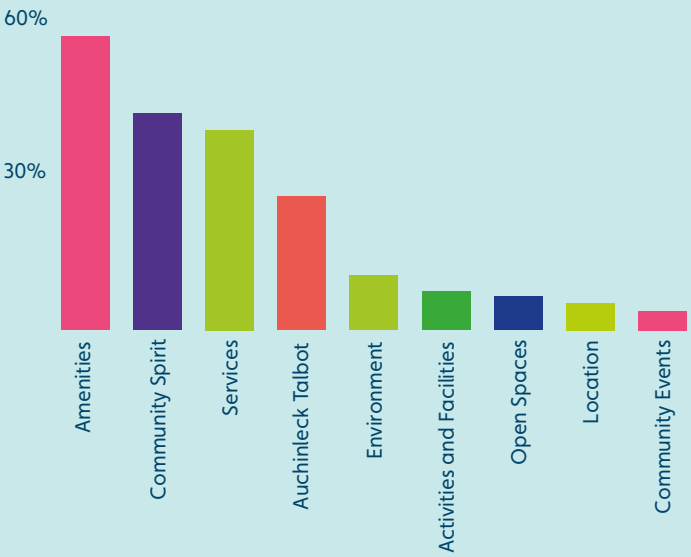
Improvements to transport links have been highlighted as well as the increasing pressure on the limited amenities and services available locally due to the significant housing developments currently underway.

A shared vision for our community

"In 2024, Auchinleck will be a clean and healthy place with a thriving economy providing local employment opportunities within the heart of our community. It will offer a friendly welcome to visitors and will develop and deliver social activities for everyone."

The results from the community survey show us what the people of Auchinleck like

What do you ***like*** about your community?



Quotes taken from the survey

'I think Auchinleck is a proud village and has a strong sense of community. Everyone knows everyone and I like this as it makes me feel my kids are safer'

'There are still people who have pride in their village and try to do their best to make it look ok. It has a small industrial estate at HighHouse which does provide premises for small businesses to thrive. There are housing projects in and around it which is a good sign. We have the new centre and bowling arena and of course Talbot Club'

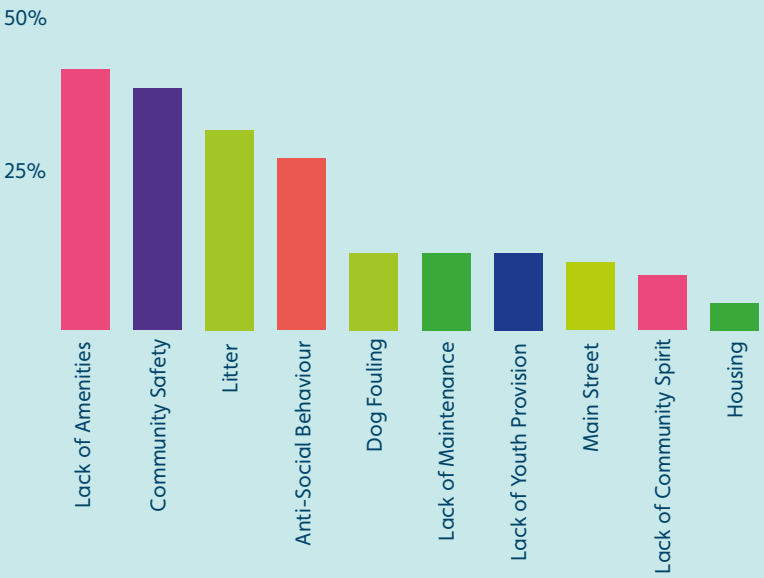
'We pull together in times of need, sense of community'

'I feel that our community has a lot of spirit for our village such as our football team, we have nice playparks for kids to play in and lovely walks and nature to enjoy. Auchinleck has its kind people as well'

'Local shops in the area do what they can to help and should be recognised'

The results from the community survey show us what the people of Auchinleck dislike

What do you ***dislike*** about your community?



Quotes taken from the survey

'Lack of community participation. Litter (especially after lunch time at the academy) and empty derelict buildings on the main street'

'Not many activities for teenagers'

'Not a lot of jobs in the area, therefore commuting to work is essential. Main Street does not look appealing, first impressions are important for visitors driving through. Organised events not very well advertised/attended'

'Public transport links (especially lack of trains), not enough shops/businesses, lack of colour in village e.g drab buildings and vandalism'

'There are a lot of abandoned buildings and grounds which are not looked after. There isn't anything to do and everything that gets done to Auchinleck gets ruined by people'

Theme 1: Community Facilities, Activities and Events

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

More activities for all ages
- Compile information and promote current activities.
- Identify gaps in the provision.
- Identify possible funding opportunities.
- Liaise with providers and partners to develop new activities for people of all ages.

Affordable events for young people during school holidays
- Develop a range of holiday clubs for young people that offers different activities. (Sports, arts, crafts etc.)
- Develop opportunities for lunches at holiday activities.
- Develop a marketing strategy to promote events and increase participation (Social media, local press, posters etc.)

More activities for older people to address social isolation
- Work with partners to provide access to activities and lunch clubs for the elderly.
- Develop opportunities to deliver new inter-generational project.

Healthy food initiatives e.g. community café/community food growing
- Develop opportunities to learn and promote 'Grow Your Own' initiatives.
- Provide community cookery classes.
- Investigate the opportunity to develop a community café.

More affordable community events for everyone
- Support local groups and organisations to develop local events.
- Provide access to training on event management and marketing.
- Develop a marketing strategy to promote events and increase participation (Social media, local press, posters etc.)

Potential Partners
Auchinleck Community Development Initiative, Auchinleck Indoor Bowling Club, Auchinleck Resource Centre(Day Care Centre), Auchinleck Talbot Football Club, East Ayrshire Council, Coalfield's Community Transport, East Ayrshire Leisure Trust, Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire, Yipworld, local care homes, churches, schools, businesses, community groups, schools and residents.

Theme 2: Roads and Traffic

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

Address road maintenance issues

- Improve maintenance on roads and paths.
- Liaise with East Ayrshire Council.
- Raise awareness of fault reporting process and access to the free phone service at the Boswell Centre.

Improve street lighting

- Liaise with council to determine ownership of lighting.
- Create a point of contact to report any faults or maintenance issues.
- Raise awareness of fault reporting process and access to the free phone service at the Boswell Centre.

Improve safety of pedestrians and enable a safer flow of traffic

- Create traffic calming measures to stop speeding.
- Explore the possibility of restricted traffic flow on Main Street (Single lane and traffic light system.)
- Explore the possibility of safer footpaths on Main Street.
- Assess CCTV coverage and explore additional installation as appropriate.

Reduce traffic levels including HGV's

- Undertake a traffic survey for main street.
- Look at the possibility of restricting access to heavy goods vehicles unless specifically delivering to Auchinleck.
- Promote preferred transport routes with HGV operators.

Potential Partners

Auchinleck Community Development Initiative, Ayrshire Roads Alliance, East Ayrshire Council, Police Scotland, Strathclyde Passenger Transport, Sustrans Scotland, Transerve, local businesses, community groups and residents.

Theme 3: Local Environment

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

Improve appearance of Main Street Identify owners of vacant properties in the main street to

- Explore opportunities for creative solutions to improve the appearance of empty properties on the main street.
- Encourage businesses to take part in the 'I clean my street' initiative.
- Improve the appearance of railway bridge over the main street.

Improve appearance of surrounding areas

- Improve the entrances to the village to make them more attractive.
- Improve the appearance of the railway station and waste ground at side of railway line.

Make the most of green space and parks

- Explore the possibility of introducing more playparks.
- Identify new seating areas.
- Identify walking areas.

Village enhancements e.g. flower tubs, hanging baskets

- Identify gap sites for the potential for community spaces (Seated areas / gardens etc.)
- Identify green areas that can be taken on and used by the community to develop community gardens.
- Maintain existing tubs and baskets.

Address litter and fly tipping

- Identify and highlight litter hotspots.
- Place litter bins around the community.
- Organise and promote community litter picks
- Organise an amnesty event for large and / or white goods once a year.
- Develop awareness raising campaigns.

Deal with dog fouling

- Place dog refuse bins around the community.
- Arrange for free bags to be more widely available locally.
- Develop awareness raising campaigns
- Explore the possibility of introducing dog wardens.

Potential Partners

Abelio Scotrail, Auchinleck Community Development Initiative, Central Scotland Green Network, Coalfield Environment Initiative, East Ayrshire Council, Greenspace Scotland, local businesses, community groups, schools and residents.

Theme 4: Services

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

Develop a safer community for everyone
- Liaise with police to establish a more visible police presence in Auchinleck.
- Identify areas that would benefit from the installation of CCTV cameras.
- Identify areas that would benefit from additional lighting.

More support for vulnerable people
- Identify opportunities to develop safe spaces and clubs for vulnerable groups.
- Promote local and online support groups.

Improve access to information on money management advice
- Work with partners to provide local surgeries
- Promote details to access community welfare officer.

Improve access to information on health services and activities
- Work with partners to provide local surgeries.
- Identify and promote current groups
- Promote details to access community welfare officer.

Improve social housing conditions
- Improve stock of local housing.
- Improve garden areas of social houses.

Better engagement between service providers and local community members
- Develop community engagement opportunities .
- Liaise with service providers to publicise their activities throughout the community.

Potential Partners
Auchinleck Community Development Initiative, Citizen's Advice Bureau, East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Release Ayrshire, Shire Housing, Sovereign Credit Union, Yipworld, local churches, businesses, community groups and residents.

Theme 5: Employability and Enterprise

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

Increase opportunities to attract tourism to the local area

- Develop a heritage trail to promote the diverse industrial history of the village
- Enhance local attractions to bring people into Auchinleck

Encourage more local businesses to Main Street

- Promote vacant premises
- Identify and promote potential grants and alternative funding opportunities
- Encourage set up of local social enterprise initiatives to support social needs (Affordable childcare facilities)

Support for people trying to get into work

- Promote and support local community mentor initiatives
- Promote current 'Ready for Work' community provision
- Identify and deliver new employment training initiatives

Support local businesses

- Promote local businesses
- Liaise with local businesses and support the development of a business association

Potential Partners

Auchinleck Community Development Initiative, Ayrshire College, Business Gateway Ayrshire, Council for Voluntary Organisations (East Ayrshire), East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Works, Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire, local businesses, community groups and local residents

Early actions funded through Participatory Budget

The process of creating a five year action plan also included an opportunity to make the most of a Participatory Budget of £20,000. Local voluntary groups and organisations applied for funding in order to deliver soon, seen and successful projects that are aligned with the themes and priorities outlined in this action plan. Local residents were able to vote on the projects at the community open event which helped inform how the funding was allocated. The successful groups included:

Auchinleck Primary Parent Council	Activity Groups
Auchinleck Community Council	Citizen of the Year
Auchinleck Community Development Initiative	Celebrate Auchinleck in Multi-Cultural and Intergenerational
The Knowe Garden Centre	Youth Project @ The Knowe
Auchinleck Community Development Initiative	Community Welfare Champion
Quest for Wellbeing Group	Sticky Fingers Children's Club
Auchinleck Indoor Bowling Club	Junior Uniforms
Auchinleck Indoor Bowling Club	Revamp of ladies & Disabled Toilets
St Patricks Parent Council	St Patricks Pupils Plant Science Programme

Making the links to the East Ayrshire Community Plan

East Ayrshire Delivery Plans	Auchinleck Community Action Plan
Safer Communities Wellbeing Economy & Skills	Auchinleck Community Action Plan Themes: Community Facilities, Activities and Events Roads and Traffic Local Environment Services Employability & Enterprise

Making it Happen

This report summarises the findings of the Community Views Survey carried out in Auchinleck and the Voting Day which allowed the local community to review the results of the survey so far and make further comment on community issues and vote on which priorities were most important to them.
The survey was carried out as part of the Coalfields Community Futures participatory process in partnership with local group representatives and the community that will help to inform the preparation of the Auchinleck 5 year Community Action Plan.

Auchinleck Community Action Plan
The Community Action Plan contains:

- A summary of the Auchinleck Community Profile.
- Our main Likes and Dislikes expressed in the community survey.
- Our Vision Statement for Auchinleck.
- The main themes and priorities for action
- The Participatory Budget projects that are helping kick start the action plan.
- Making the links between the Auchinleck Community Action Plan outcomes and those of East Ayrshire Community Plan.

Getting Involved
The Auchinleck Community Action Plan is not just for the few but for the whole community of Auchinleck. We hope you will read it, consider its content and help toward making it work by taking action where you are, in whatever way you can. If everyone did something positive for their community every day, then what a difference that would make!

Many thanks go to all those who took their time to share their views and to the volunteers and participants who made the Voting Day a great success. Thanks go to members of the community who contributed the images in our Auckinleck Community Action Plan.

The Participatory Budget from Coalfields Regeneration Trust was £20,000. This funding has been used to help take forward local projects, which support the key themes found in the community action plan.

To find out more information about the Auchinleck Community Action Plan or to volunteer with any projects please contact:
Email: auchinleckcap@outlook.com
www.facebook.com/auchinleckactionplan

COALFIELDS COMMUNITY FUTURES

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